

Serial No.: 10/733,060

Amendments to the Drawings

The attached drawing sheet includes new FIG. 7, to be added to this Patent Application in response to the objection to the drawings.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This application has been reconsidered carefully in light of the Office Action dated as mailed on 22 September 2005 and the Detailed Action mailed 02 May 2007. A careful reconsideration of the application by the Examiner in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

5 This response is timely filed as it is filed within the one (1) month period for response to the Detailed Action mailed 02 May 2007.

No additional claim fee is believed due as a result of this Amendment because neither the total number of pending claims nor the number of pending independent claims is believed to exceed the total number and the number of independent claims, respectively, for which fees have previously been paid. If, however, it is determined that such a fee is properly due as a result of this communication, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of such fees or credit any overpayment, associated with this communication, to Deposit Account 19-3550.

Amendment to the Drawings

By the above, Applicant has added a new FIG. 7 in response to the objection to the drawings. Support for FIG. 7 can be found in, for example claims 1 and 11, and at page 11, last paragraph of Applicant's Specification. No new matter has been added to the drawings.

Amendment to the Specification

Applicant amended the Specification at pages 6 and 17 to include descriptions of the new FIG. 7. Support this Amendment can be found in, for

Serial No.: 10/733,060

example claims 1 and 11, and at page 11, last paragraph of Applicant's Specification. No new matter has been added.

Amendment to the Claims

5 By the above, claim 11 has been rewritten to correct the respective dependency thereof. Claims 1-28 remain in the application.

Comments on Detailed Action dated 02 May 2007

10 The Detailed Action states that Applicants should have responded to a rejection of Claim 21 and addressed the discrepancy between the allowance of Claim 21 indicated in the "Office Action Summary" and the "clear rejection" in Paragraph 14. Applicants note that in addition to the Office Action Summary, Paragraph 17 clearly states that Claims 21-28 are allowed, Paragraph 5 does not indicate Claim 21 is rejected, and Paragraph 14 does not state that Claim 21 was or is rejected. 15 Paragraph 14, as compared to the rejection of independent Claim 13 in Paragraph 13, is merely a statement about two elements of Claim 21. Applicants believe in view of the Office Action as a whole that the prior response was justified and did not warrant the current Detailed Action.

20 Applicants further assert that the now apparent rejection of Claim 21 is improper as it does not address all claim limitations of Claim 21. Instead of issuing the Detailed Action, a new non-final Office Action should have issued explaining in detail for the record how Claim 21 is rejected. As the Detailed Action does not provide the necessary details to make a proper rejection of Claim 21, if the rejection of Claim 21 as anticipated by the Shirk et al. Patent is going to be maintained, 25 Applicants respectfully assert the next Office Action should be non-final to allow Applicants a proper opportunity to respond.

As Applicants believe, from Examiner Chambers's comments during the telephone interview on 19 December 2005, that the rejections in view of the Shirk et al. Patent will not stand, Applicants provide herein comments on differences between the invention of Claim 21 and the Shirk et al. Patent, to expedite further prosecution.

The undersigned telephoned Examiner Chambers on 16 May 2007 to question the status of Claims 22-28, which are not commented on in Paragraph 2 of the Detailed Action dated 02 May 2007. Examiner Chambers indicated that Claims 22-28 contain allowable subject matter and stand "objected to" with Claims 5-7, 15-17 and 19. Examiner Chamber said he would issue a telephone interview summary indicating the allowable subject matter of Claims 22-28.

Drawing Objections

The drawings have been objected to for not showing features of claims 3, 11 and 21. FIG. 7 has been added, which shows retaining arms extending from the connector socket and snap-locked to the initiator retainer element. New FIG. 7 overcomes the objection to the drawings.

Claim Objections

Claim 1 has been objected to for not providing antecedent basis for "the inflator device" in lines 10 and 12. The preamble can provide antecedent basis for limitations recited later in the claim. Applicant searched for a rule supporting this objection, and was unable to find any support. Applicant requests the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone to further discuss this issue, if necessary.

Claim 11 now depends from claim 3, thereby rendering the objection thereto moot.

The Office Action states there is no antecedent basis for “the at least one electrical connector” of claim 4. Applicant notes lines 4-5 of claim 1 (above) provides antecedent basis for this element of claim 4.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

The rejection of claims 1-4, 8-10, 13, 14 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Shirk et al., U.S. Patent 6,056,314, is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action states the Shirk et al. Patent discloses a connector socket 62 and a retainer 122 (both referred to as such below) for connecting the initiator to the connector socket 62. The retainer 122 fits into a groove 70 of the connector socket 62.

Applicant’s invention of claim 1 requires that the initiator retainer element is adapted to be disposed on a first side of a wall of the inflator device and the connector socket is adapted to be disposed on a second side of the wall opposite the first side. Unlike Applicant’s claimed invention, the retainer 122 is on the same side of the wall 40 as the connector socket 62. As the Shirk et al. Patent does not teach or suggest an initiator retainer element on an opposite side of a wall from a connector socket, as in Applicant’s claimed invention, the Shirk et al. Patent does not anticipate Applicant’s invention of independent claim 1.

Independent claim 13 requires retaining arms of an initiator retainer element that extend through a wall opening of the inflator device and a connector socket opening to snap-lock to a surface of the connector socket and connect the initiator assembly to the inflator device wall. Again, the retainer 122 of the Shirk et al. Patent is disposed on the same side of the wall 40 as the connector socket 62. The retainer 122 does not have any retainer arm that extends through any wall opening of the inflator device and snap-locks to the connector socket 62. As the Shirk et al.

Patent does not teach or suggest initiator retainer element retaining arms that extend through a wall opening of the inflator device and a connector socket opening to snap-lock to a surface of the connector socket and connect the initiator assembly to the inflator device wall, as in Applicant's claimed invention, the Shirk et al. Patent does not anticipate Applicant's invention of independent claim 13.

Independent claim 21 requires that the initiator retainer element is disposed on a first side of an adapter plate and the connector socket is disposed on a second side of the adapter plate opposite the first side. Unlike Applicant's claimed invention, in the Shirk et al. Patent the retainer 122 is on the same side of the wall 40 as the connector socket 62. As the Shirk et al. Patent does not teach or suggest an initiator retainer element on an opposite side of an adapter plate from a connector socket, as in Applicant's claimed invention, the Shirk et al. Patent does not anticipate Applicant's invention of independent claim 21.

Furthermore, claim 21 requires at least two retaining arms that extend through an adapter plate opening, and where latch tabs of the retaining arms are snap-locked to a surface of one of the initiator retainer element and the connector socket to connect the initiator retainer element, the adapter plate, and the connector socket together. Again, the retainer 122 of the Shirk et al. Patent is disposed on the same side of the wall 40 as the connector socket 62. The retainer 122 does not have any retainer arm that extends through any wall opening and that snap-locks to the connector socket 62. As the Shirk et al. Patent does not teach or suggest initiator retainer element retaining arms that extend through a wall opening to snap-lock to a surface of one of an initiator retainer element and a connector socket to connect the initiator retainer element, the adapter plate, and the connector socket together, as in Applicant's claimed invention, the Shirk et al. Patent does not anticipate Applicant's invention of independent claim 21.

Serial No.: 10/733,060

Claims 2-4, 8-10, 14 and 18 depend from claims 1 and 13, respectively, and are allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above.

Furthermore, claim 2 recites that the initiator retainer element and the connector socket are adapted to snap-lock together through an opening in the inflator device. As the retainer 122 and the connector socket 62 of the Shirk et al. Patent are disposed on the same side of wall 40, the Shirk et al. Patent does not teach or suggest that the retainer 122 and the connector socket 62 snap-lock together through an opening in the inflator device.

Claim 3 recites at least two retaining arms adapted to extend through an opening in an inflator device. Claim 3 is patentable over the Shirk et al. Patent for reasons similar to those discussed above for claim 13.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

The rejection of claims 12 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shirk et al., U.S. Patent 6,056,314, is respectfully traversed. Claims 12 and 20 depend from claims 1 and 13, respectively, and are thus patentable for at least the same reasons discussed above for claims 1 and 13.

In addition, the Office Action states it would have been obvious to form the retainer of the Shirk et al. Patent from plastic. However, the retainer is specifically disclosed as being formed of metal to engage the retainer wiper arms 134 with the terminals 112 and 114 to complete an electrical circuit between the terminals through the metal of the retainer (Col. 4, lines 56-64). The metal retainer serves a dedicated purpose that plastic materials would not be suited for. There is thus no suggestion or motivation to form the retainer of the Shirk et al. Patent from plastic.

For at least these additional reasons, Applicant's invention of claims 12 and 20 would not have been obvious over the Shirk et al. Patent.

Serial No.: 10/733,060

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his efforts in identifying claims claims 5-7, 11, 15-17, 19 and 22-28 contain allowable subject matter. Applicant asserts the above Amendment and remarks place all claims in condition for allowance.

5

Telephone Interview Summary

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his time and courtesies extended during a telephone interview on 19 December 2005, with the undersigned. Applicant submitted a copy of new FIG. 7 and a proposed amendment to claim 1. After hearing Applicant's remarks why claims 1 and 13 were not anticipated by the Shirk et al. Patent (presented above), the Examiner indicated the proposed amendment to claim 1 was not likely necessary. Applicant considered the Examiner's remarks, and has not amended claim 1 herein. No agreement was reached.

10

15

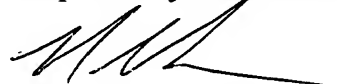
Conclusion

Applicant intends to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicant has not resolved in this response, Applicant's undersigned attorney requests an additional telephone interview with the Examiner.

20

Applicant sincerely believes that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully requests early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



Pauley Petersen & Erickson
2800 West Higgins Road; Suite 365
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60169
TEL (847) 490-1400 FAX (847) 490-1403

Mark D. Swanson
Registration No. 48,498